BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

BCStats

Data Services
(250) 387-0327
BC.Stats@gov.bc.ca
March 11, 2011
Issue: 11-02

Labour Force Statistics ◆ February 2011

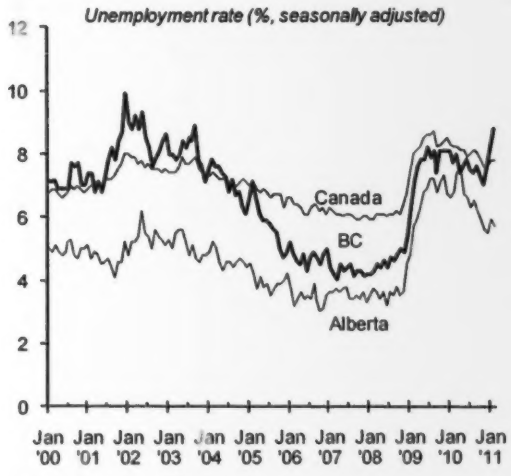
(All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated)

Unemployment rate jumps to 8.8% in February

British Columbia's unemployment rate increased in February by 0.6 percentage points to 8.8%. The increase was a result of 26,200 more people participating in the labour force (+1.1%).

For the second month in a row BC's unemployment rate has edged up above the national average (7.8%). BC has the highest unemployment rate of the western provinces—sitting 3.5 percentage points above Manitoba (5.3%) and 3.1 percentage points above Saskatchewan and Alberta (5.7%).

BC has the highest unemployment rate of the western provinces and is above the national average



BC Stats

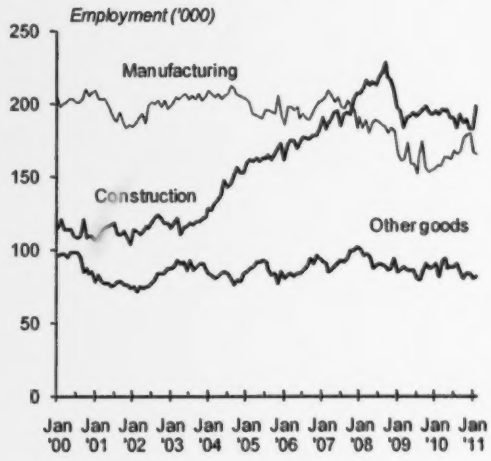
In February, the unemployment rate among women aged 25 and over jumped 1.5 percentage points, to 7.4%, while the rate among men edged down 0.5 percentage points to 8.0%. Since November 2008, the unemployment rate among men (aged 15 and over) in BC has remained higher than the rate among women.

Despite small employment gains for BC's youth (+1.0%) over 9,000 young people (aged 15 to 24) entered the labour market in February causing the youth unemployment rate to climb to 14.5% from 13.3%.

Construction fuels job growth in the goods sector

The goods-producing sector posted job gains again in February (+3.6%). Almost all of the employment growth was attributable to construction (+8.2%), although there were also more people working in utilities (+18.6%) and forestry, fishing, mining (+1.1%). However, there were fewer jobs in agriculture (-5.2%) and manufacturing (-0.7%).

February's growth in the goods sector has been fuelled by construction



BC Stats

Over the past twelve months, employment in the goods sector has grown by 2.9% (or +12,600 jobs). Despite the gains seen this month in construction and January's job losses in manufacturing, over half of the growth seen in the goods sector between February 2010 and February 2011 is related to manufacturing.

In the services-producing sector, employment shrank slightly in February (-0.3%). The losses were associated with the following industries: trade (-2.8%), other services (-5.8%), health care and social assistance (-0.6%), business, building and other support services (-1.6%), and transportation and warehousing (-0.8).

Professional, scientific and technical services (+5.6%), public administration (+3.3%), and educational services (+1.4%) posted job gains in February.

Off-reserve Aboriginal Population

In February (*3-month moving average, unadjusted*), the labour force participation rate of the off-reserve Aboriginal population aged 25 to 54 was 73.8%, compared with 85.0% for their non-Aboriginal counterparts (a difference of 11.2 percentage points). This gap has widened considerably since February 2009, when participation rates for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 25 to 54 were 77.3% and 84.9%, respectively.

Immigrant Population

Indicators suggest that it takes longer for female immigrants to integrate into BC's labour market than males. In February (*3-month moving average, unadjusted*), the labour force participation rate of BC's female landed immigrant population (aged 25 to 54) was 74.0%, while the rate among their Canadian-born counterparts was 9.2 percentage points higher, at 83.2%. Most of this difference is a result of lower participation rates among more recent female immigrants. On the other hand, the labour force participation rate among male landed immigrants (aged 25 to 54) was virtually identical to that of Canadian-born males (89.3% vs. 90.1%, respectively).

The Regions

At the regional level, unemployment rates (*3-month moving average, unadjusted*) ranged from 7.5% (Cariboo) to 9.3% (Thompson/Okanagan). Compared to the same time last year, employment (*3-month moving average, unadjusted*) has increased in every region of the province except Northeast (-2.7%), Kootenay (-2.0%), and Vancouver Island/Coast (-1.7%).

The Nation

Nationwide, employment and the number of persons in the labour force increased in February, and the unemployment rate remained unchanged at 7.8%. All of the job gains involved part-time employment.

Alberta was the only province to post noticeable employment gains (+13,700). Ontario and Saskatchewan experienced job losses while the other provinces saw little change.

Selected Statistics	Feb-11	Jan-11	Feb-10
BC Unemployment Rate (%)	8.8	8.2	7.7
Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)	7.8	7.8	8.2
BC Employment ('000)	2,261	2,252	2,246
BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)	65.8	65.2	65.7
Feb % change in employment relative to:	-	0.4	0.6
Feb % change in labour force relative to:	-	1.1	1.8